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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPE #2075 1452028
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 252028Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0669
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 3441
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9500
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAY 3386
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 0376
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0557
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4263
RHMFIUU/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

UNCLAS LIMA 002075

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: ANTI-FTA MARCH HAS LITTLE TURN-OUT, LOW IMPACT

Sensitive But Unclassified, Please Handle Accordingly

¶1. (U) Labor union leaders, farmers, students, and members of left-wing political groups participated in a march in Lima against the Peru-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on the afternoon of 5/24. Organizers had talked about bringing masses of cocaleros and other malcontents into town, and wanted this event to be the spearhead of a national protest against the FTA. Frustrating these expectations, there was a sparse turn-out in Lima (police estimated around 4,000 marchers), and only the most limited of protests in regional capitals. The march in Lima terminated in front of the Congress building, where anti-FTA leaders made speeches denouncing an alleged political deal within the legislature to approve the pact once the second round of presidential voting is over on June 4.

¶2. (U) The demonstration turned into a sidelight of the election campaign when ultra-nationalist candidate Ollanta Humala's wife Nadine attempted to insert herself (uninvited) at the head of the column of marchers, along with a phalanx of supporters bearing signs denouncing Humala's opponent Alan Garcia. A group of peasant leaders confronted Nadine, telling her that the march was not intended to be a partisan political event. She and her supporters found themselves obliged to withdraw.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: Timing this protest for ten days before the election was a poor strategic choice by the organizers. The focus of the public and the media has been on the candidates' varied accusations against each other, in which the FTA has played only a minor role. Attempts to try to hobble FTA approval are no doubt still in the works, but FTA supporters here have to be encouraged that this latest effort fell flat on its face.

STRUBLE